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CLAIMS

1. A fluid filter assembly comprising:
- 5 a housing having an fluid inlet and a fluid outlet; and
- a filter element mounted on a support within the housing between the fluid inlet and the fluid outlet,
- wherein the housing has a drain outlet closed by the filter element support and the fluid filter assembly further comprises a ^{resilient} loading element loading the support
- 10 against the drain outlet.
- ~~2. A fluid filter assembly according to claim 1, wherein the loading element is a resilient loading element.~~
- 15 ² 2. A fluid filter assembly according to claim 1 ~~or 1~~, wherein the loading element also loads sealing faces of the support which seal the filter element between the fluid inlet and the fluid outlet.
- ³ 3. A fluid filter assembly according to ^{claim 1 or 2,} ~~any one of the preceding~~ claims, wherein the housing comprises a base and a removable cap fitted together, the drain outlet being formed in the base.
- 20 ⁴ 4. A fluid filter assembly according to claim ~~1~~ ³ ~~when appendant to claim 2,~~ wherein the resilient loading element is provided between the support and
- 25 the cap.
- ⁵ 5. A fluid filter assembly according to claim ~~4~~ ³ or ~~5~~ ⁴, wherein the support is retained on the removable cap.
- 30 ⁶ 6. A fluid filter assembly according to claim ~~6~~ ⁵, wherein the support has a retaining portion protruding from the support and engaging the cap, and the

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loading element is a coiled spring, the coils of which encircle the retaining portion.

7 9. A fluid filter assembly according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the filter element is annular and the support includes an annular end wall extending around one end of the filter element, the annular end wall closing the drain outlet and the loading element loading the support axially.

8 10. A fluid filter assembly according to claim 9, wherein the annular end wall of the support has a resilient annular valve element adjacent thereto which constitutes a non-return valve across the fluid inlet and which seals the drain outlet.

9 11. A fluid filter assembly according to claim 10, wherein the annular valve element comprises a base portion disposed adjacent the annular end wall of the support, the base portion sealing the drain outlet, and a flexible flap extending from the base portion to close the fluid inlet and constitute the non-return valve.

10 12. A fluid filter assembly according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the valve element is retained on the annular end wall of the support.

11 13. A fluid filter assembly according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the fluid outlet is disposed adjacent the drain outlet and has a rim protruding into the housing beyond the drain outlet.

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